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## Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2437, TFLE01: MINISTER MOUAWAD URGES HUMANITARIAN

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06BEIRUT2437</a>	<a href="#">2006-07-21 12:39</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Beirut</a>

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 002437

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/21/2016  
TAGS: [IS](#) [LE](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: TFLE01: MINISTER MOUAWAD URGES HUMANITARIAN

RESPONSE...AND HOPES HIZBALLAH IS WEAKENED BEFORE  
CEASE-FIRE TAKES HOLD

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman. Reason: Section 1.4 (b).

SUMMARY

1. (S/NF) Minister of Social Affairs Nayla Mouawad described the humanitarian situation in Lebanon as approaching a critical point. Although she used less alarming terms than PM Siniora employed in his speech of July 19, Minister Mouawad still insisted the greatest challenge was not the supply of food and fuel, but its safe distribution inside Lebanon, especially to towns in south Lebanon. Mouawad urged the US to convince the GOI that the creation of "humanitarian corridors" was not only a civilized responsibility, but would benefit Israel by helping prevent instability in Lebanon. Mouawad also expressed deep concern that IDP flows were leading to a dangerous escalation of communal tensions, as confessions that are not accustomed to living together are being forced to share a common pool of dwindling resources. Concerning the political situation, the Minister strongly criticized the destruction of the country's infrastructure, but not in the personal terms used earlier by Siniora. Rather, she confessed that she hopes Hizballah is sufficiently weakened prior to the implementation of any cease-fire. She said that if Hizballah emerges from the conflict with most of its power still intact, democracy in Lebanon would be mortally wounded. End summary.

2. (C) Minister of Social Services Nayla Mouawad met the Ambassador and PolOff on Thursday afternoon, July 20. The sometime presidential candidate had indicated earlier that she wished to discuss the developing humanitarian situation before it reached a crisis level. In addition to her ministerial duties, Minister Mouawad runs one of the largest humanitarian NGOs in Lebanon, whose work is widely regarded as having helped reconciliation and reducing confessional tensions.

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

3. (C) Minister Mouawad disagreed with the IDP numbers being put out by the GOL (500K as of July 20). She maintained that well over 100K may have moved up into the Beirut areas from south Lebanon -- seriously complicating confessional tensions -- but the bulk of IDP movement is still relatively short distance -- from one village to another in the south.

4. (C) The Minister had three primary humanitarian concerns (all of which are inter-related): an impending shortage of supplies (particularly in south Lebanon), the current inability to safely distribute available supplies inside Lebanon (which she characterized as the biggest problem), and lastly, an increase in confessional friction, as different sectarian groups are forced together and try to equitably share a limited amount of resources.

5. (C) Mouawad asked the Ambassador for assistance in two areas: have the US intercede with GOI to permit the establishment of "humanitarian corridors" into south Lebanon -- as soon as possible. (Note: Late on July 20, Israeli PM Olmert publicly announced his government would permit at least an external corridor, although no specifics were provided End note.)

6. (C) Her second humanitarian request was for the US to coordinate and implement its humanitarian effort in such a way as to strengthen the Siniora government. Mouawad admitted the government agency in charge of humanitarian relief, the Higher Relief Committee (in the Office of the Prime Minister), was "dysfunctional," but in her opinion, it would be best if the US and EU used the many effective NGOs and international organizations that presently operate in Lebanon (Caritas, ICRC, UNRWA, UNWFO, ICMC, etc.) for

implementation and distribution, and included the Higher Relief Committee as an authorization authority -- to show the Lebanese people its government is engaged and effective.

#### POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

¶17. (C) Minister Mouawad spoke in admiring tones about the performance of PM Siniora, as well as the stalwart support

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and advice he has received from Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. Mouawad said that over the past several days Siniora had established beyond a doubt across Lebanon's political spectrum that he was a true "national" leader, rather than simply a Sunni advocate. On the other hand, she feels Saad Hariri's star has fallen, even though his speech in Saudi Arabia (Wednesday, July 19) was strong and most welcome.

¶18. (C) Mouawad's harshest words were reserved for FPM leader Michel Aoun, who she implied was a sanctimonious crook, and whose supporters simply wanted the spoils of power. She marveled at the "strangeness" of Aoun's comments in yesterday's interview with Al Jazeera television. Mouawad implied his presidential aspirations are now severely damaged, if not dead.

¶19. (C) The Minister (whose husband, President Rene Mouawad, was assassinated in 1989) expressed to the Ambassador deep concern over the physical safety of PM Siniora and Jumblatt. She stated flatly that their leadership, now and in the post-conflict period, was absolutely essential.

"I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS AS A MINISTER"

¶10. (S/NF) Although Minister Mouawad conveyed unease with the subject, she stated that if a cease-fire was implemented too soon (i.e. before Hizballah is seriously degraded), it would be very difficult for Lebanon's pro-reform forces to survive. "I have never considered leaving Lebanon, but if Hizballah emerges victorious, Lebanon will be a far different country," she informed the Ambassador.

#### TWO REQUESTS

¶11. (C) In closing, Minister Mouawad re-emphasized two issues: the urgent necessity of starting humanitarian operations now and the advantages of using that effort to strengthen the standing of the GOL with the Lebanese people. She stated the first step is the immediate establishment of humanitarian corridors inside Lebanon to the villages of the south.

¶12. (C) Finally, she urged that USG support and protect three critical figures: Fouad Siniora, Walid Jumblatt, and unexpectedly, Nabih Berri -- who in her opinion may be the best available Shia alternative to Nasrallah.

FELTMAN